



# DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

## INFORMATION SERVICE

### FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release to the PM's OF TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1946.

#### SUSQUEHANNA FLATS REMAIN CLOSED TO DUCK SHOOTING

To continue protection of the canvas-back duck, Albert M. Day, Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Interior, announced today that the proclamation signed by President Roosevelt on December 6, 1941, closing a portion of the Susquehanna Flats in Upper Chesapeake Bay, Maryland, to migratory waterfowl shooting will remain in effect during the 1946 hunting season.

"Because of the seriousness of the national waterfowl situation, we could not conscientiously request the dissolution of this proclamation when we need this refuge now more than at any time since the critical waterfowl depression of the middle 30's," said Mr. Day.

Most famous wintering grounds for the canvas-back duck, these flats have provided one of the finest waterfowl feeding grounds along the entire Atlantic coast, the Service Director pointed out. The land beneath the waters was formerly leased to the Fish and Wildlife Service by the State of Maryland. Although the lease was terminated by Maryland at the last session of its legislature, this action does not affect the proclamation.

Located immediately south of Fishing Battery Light, the closed area contains a luxuriant growth of wild celery, pond weeds, and redhead grass--an incomparable food supply for all species of waterfowl. In the opinion of the Service, the Susquehanna Flats area protects the most important single concentration of canvas-backs on the entire continent. During the early part of November, the population of these birds on the flats reaches maximum numbers for the season. From then on

they steadily taper off until about December or whenever the Susquehanna River mouth freezes over. With the area closed, the birds remain in the vicinity much longer and provide hunting opportunities over a wide area, according to Mr. Day.

Great interest has centered in the Susquehanna Flats not only because of their famous hunting background but because the area continued to attract canvasbacks at a time when they almost disappeared elsewhere in the country.

Mr. Day expressed confidence that all sportsmen interested in maintaining the sport of waterfowling will continue to cooperate with the Fish and Wildlife Service in providing this needed sanctuary on the heavily-hunted upper bay.

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